



CTC NEWSLETTER



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A FOUR-STEP STRATEGY FOR CHANGING CAREERS

By Pat Stevens

(Reprinted with permission of the Wall Street Journal)

Is a more meaningful job or a new career in your sights this year? It's unrealistic to expect a role you may have once loved to remain a perfect match. ...

Many executives and professionals experience an inner tug-of-war about making career and job changes. They vacillate between nightmares about jumping ship and daydreams about work that's heaven sent. Perhaps your heart is whispering, "Time to start over with something better."

Before you can discover your perfect job, you must find courage to dream a bigger dream. Explore the possibilities. What if you could earn a living doing something you've always wanted to do? What if you choose a job that's fun, instead of demanding?

"Ask yourself the questions you're most afraid to ask, and go after answers, even if it's one baby step at a time," says Pat Schuler, president of Gemini Resources Group, a sales and business-development coaching firm based in Minneapolis.

Realizing time is slipping away can inspire change. Tim Evans worked for Proctor & Gamble for 16 years and finished his corporate career as vice president of sales development, North America, with Guinness. He then started a small commercial-awning company, which he later sold. Despite his success, something was missing.

"As a parent, I discovered there is a difference in being a good provider and being a good father. To be in your children's memories, you have to be present in their lives," says Mr. Evans.

He chose to transfer his skills to the nonprofit sector, becoming director of fund development for the Girl Scout-Circle T.

Council Inc. in Fort Worth, Texas. This allows him to spend more time with his family and make a contribution to the community.

"The nonprofit world is rich with opportunity to give back to the community. I love that I am helping make a difference in young people's lives," he says.

Are you ready to find a more meaningful job that's a better match for your skills and interests? Here are some tactics to help you make the change:

"We all have big changes in our lives that are more or less a second chance."

*- Harrison Ford in
HARRISON FORD:
IMPERFECT HERO
by Garry Jenkins*



1. Face your fears.

You'll be leaving your comfort zone as you explore new directions. You'll need to develop short-term, intermediate and long-term goals, and decide on the steps you'll need to accomplish them. Break these into smaller steps so your quest seems less frightening.

"Even the strongest of us can find ourselves bitten by the fear bug," says Ms. Schuler. "Understand that fear isn't a signal to stop, a red light. It's a yellow light, telling us to proceed with caution."

Learning more about your options can help reduce your fear. Ask yourself: What is within my ability to change, control or influence? Then give yourself permission to stop worrying about things you can't control, so you won't be devoured by fear.

Controlling your thinking also helps ward off the fear that accompanies moving into the unknown, Ms. Schuler says. It's easy to anticipate the worst: My family will starve, we'll lose the farm, I'll never work in this town again.

But by controlling your thinking, you also can visualize the opposite outcome -- that you might gain pleasure and earn more money to do the things you love and care for your loved ones and have a more balanced life, she says.

There's no yellow brick road leading to exciting new jobs, but you can choose to use strategies that can help you make a career change, however uncomfortable. "Recognize that change often looks and feels like chaos, especially at first," says Ms. Schuler.

2. Separate pipe dreams from realistic goals.

Learn about marketplace and hiring trends. Identify expanding industries, downsizing patterns and outsourcing practices. Analyze how changing business practices affect job choices. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, eight of the top 10 fastest growing jobs in the next five years will involve computer skills; in contrast, projections indicate bank teller, ranching and farming and basic office jobs will diminish.

Be sure your desired field will support your standard of living. The BLS's Occupational Outlook Handbook is a good place to start your research. To learn more about pay and employment trends, find out what's happening within and outside your company, speak with co-workers, read industry publications, and even consider volunteering in the new career or industry.

Be creative and design your dream career. Perhaps you're meant to do more than one new thing simultaneously. "People will continue to have portfolio or potpourri careers where they may have two or three jobs at the same time," says Leslie B. Prager, a career counselor and senior partner with the Prager-Bernstein Group, a career-counseling and out-placement company in New York City. These can tap your skills, energize you with new opportunities, and help you combine what you love with how you earn a living.

"Change is such hard work."

- Billy Crystal



3. Create stepping stones.

Consider taking assessment tests to discover your hidden talents and jobs that fit them, says Ms. Prager. Leading tests include the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Strong Interest Inventory and Campbell Interest & Skill Survey.

You'll likely find many ways to transfer your competencies and skills to your new

role. Create a resume that clearly shows how your abilities apply to the job you want. "A generic resume probably will be highly ineffective in helping the job seeker switch careers or industries," says Liz Spears, a resume writer in Arlington, Texas.

She encourages career changers to do their homework to determine the skills they need to qualify for a new job or enter a new industry. Network with business contacts, attend professional meetings and conduct other industry-specific research.

On your resume and in interviews, highlight personal and job-related skills that employers need. You'll need to speak the jargon of the job and industry. And it's always a good idea to cite your interpersonal, management, technological and communication abilities since these are always in demand.

If you lack required credentials, seek the training you need to bridge the gap. A willingness to learn new skills shows initiative. Since most jobs change constantly, emphasize how your work history, flexibility and creativity can help companies reinvent their own business strategies.

Emphasize unique skills that add value, says Ms. Schuler. Ask yourself: What would a new company get from hiring me? Would it get leadership, someone calm under fire, or a person gifted in guiding difficult transitions? Write an "elevator speech," a 30-second personal introduction that sums up what you can do for employers. "Practice it so it becomes as natural as ordering a cup of coffee," she says.

4. Stay tuned into your needs and goals.

Expect to redefine your perfect job and career path as your personal circumstances change. "Life is a journey of change. We can either wait for the universe to thrust a needed change upon us or we can be active agents of change in our own lives," says Ms. Schuler.

Instead of job security, think job resiliency. Career management nowadays means developing the skills and flexibility needed to quickly respond to shifting employer requirements. "Pursue what's meaningful," says Brenda Shull-Miller, a former outplacement executive in Colleyville, Texas, who's switching to a career in leadership development.

You don't have to make a dramatic change overnight. However, postponing pivotal career decisions too long makes them woulda-coulda-shoulda decisions.

What's Next?

To relinquish security and embrace the unknown, you may need to make a leap of faith. But be prepared. Your initial changes may catapult you into cycles of interesting new possibilities.

Liz Leeds, a human-resources consultant in Boston, discovered this firsthand after she moved to Miami for a job as an HR consultant with a major national accounting firm. She had lived in the Boston area for 24 years, and the change was scary and exciting. But her employer closed a year and a half later, and she was out of work.

Evaluating her options, she decided to earn a master's degree in business administration. She took an interim position at a local medical school while studying at the University of Miami. In 2003, with her new M.B.A. in hand, she landed her dream position as a compensation consultant with Watson Wyatt Worldwide in Coral Gables, Fla. The job allows her to travel and work in different environments.

Starting over is more difficult than starting a new job, but it's also more interesting and rewarding. Take a deep breath, and imagine what type of job you'd really like to be doing before too long. Pursuing it is the first step in making your resolutions come true.

-- Ms. Stevens changed her career to writing from teaching. She is based in Granbury, Texas.



"Most of us are about as eager to be changed as we were to be born, and go through our changes in a similar state of shock."

- James Baldwin

EDITOR'S NOTES

Every few months my boss, Dr. Bill Owen, insists that I attend the meetings of SAVE (Staffing Alliance of Virginia Employers) and SAME (Staffing Alliance of Maryland Employers). Recruiters from companies of all sizes attend these meetings to discuss topics of common interest. I always whine and moan about attending these meetings because they are almost always held in a location that requires driving on the beltway or I-66 in the late afternoon, but Dr. Owen can be persuasive. And (please don't tell him this!) he's right — I can learn a lot from those recruiters.

At a recent meeting, the recruiters were giving advice to some shiny young graduates of the school at which we were meeting and it soon turned into a Recruiters' Pet Peeve Swapping Party. I found it a very educational session and pass some of my notes on to you here. None of this advice is written on stone tablets and passed down from the Job Search Gods. There are lots of different opinions on these topics and much depends on the industry, the job level, and other special factors.

Almost all of the companies represented at the meeting pay to use Monster.com, CareerBuilder, and DCJobs, but many are advertising and looking for candidates on niche job boards for their particular industry — health, for instance.

The recruiters present were unanimous in preferring chronological resumes or a combination of chronological and functional over strictly functional resumes. They believe that it is easier to find the information they need on a chronological resume — i.e., what that candidate can do for their company.



"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself."

*- Andy Warhol in
THE PHILOSOPHY OF
ANDY WARHOL*

Apparently, searching a resume database for key words isn't enough for some of the big companies anymore. Now they are including "screening" questions on their websites to help them narrow down their candidate choices even more.

Target your cover letter and/or your resume to each job applied for.

Don't "spam" or "blast" your resume. Know exactly what jobs you have

applied for at what companies. When they call an applicant who doesn't remember applying for their job, it makes a very bad impression! If an applicant is applying for any job out there, then s/he must be desperate and not very competent.

While involved in a job search, make sure that your voice mail recording sounds professional. (Apparently, some of those "funny" messages have eliminated a few candidates before the beep!)

Many of the recruiters from the big companies said that they don't read cover letters until a resume has been coughed

up by a specific resume database search — and then only after the resume has caught their interest.

Most of the recruiters stated that, if the job ad asked for salary information and the applicant doesn't supply it, then it is a strike against that candidate. S/he did not follow directions. One recruiter from a large firm automatically eliminates any candidate that doesn't follow directions.

Their advice regarding interviews was to go into the interview with 3 important things you want that company to know about you and stay until you tell them those 3 things. Work those 3 things into the conversation as smoothly as possible. They said this was especially important for those unfortunate applicants who find themselves being interviewed by a terrible interviewer — for instance, someone who does all the talking and doesn't let the applicant talk.

*"We did not
change as we
grew older; we
just became
more clearly
ourselves."*



- Lynn Hall in
*WHERE HAVE ALL THE TIGERS
GONE?*

JOB LEADS

Earlier this year I found articles about Vocation Vacations in "Entrepreneur Magazine" (March 2005) and the

"2Young2Retire Newsletter" (February 25, 2005) and was intrigued, so I explored their website. I don't know anyone who has tried their service, but it sounds like a fantastic idea!

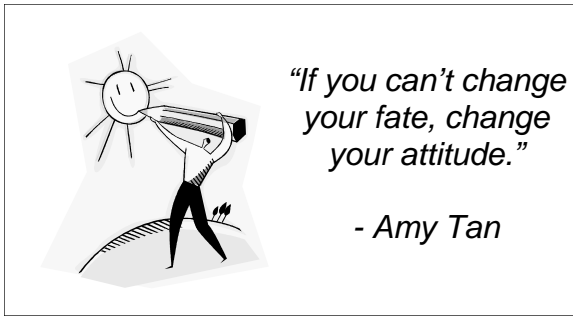
VocationVacations

(www.vocationvacations.com) offers you a chance to test drive a job for a short period. They offer many jobs to choose from and send you to the job site where you are mentored by a professional in that field.

Here are some of the vacations I found on their website this month:

- Advertising Director at Red Guitar Advertising Agency
- Brewmaster at Rogue Brewery
- Car Restorer at Vintage OffRoad
- Choreographer with Kishaya
- Events Producer at Cranborne House Productions
- Fashion Designer at Global Purchasing
- Hot Rod Manufacturer at Hot Rods & Horsepower
- Innkeeper at Lightner Farmhouse
- Interior Designer at Irwin J. Alexander Design
- Landscape Designer at Andrew Fisher-Tomlin
- Make-Up Artist with Cheek to Chic
- Muralist & Gallery Owner with Man One
- Music Producer at Murray Music
- Perfumer at Nantucket Natural Oils
- Pet Resort Owner at Country Lane Pet Resort
- Photographer at Lori Berkowitz Photography
- Radio Personality with Dayna Steele
- Sports Announcer & Promotions Manager at PGE Park

- Tea House Owner at Farmhouse Tea Shoppe
- TV Production Designer at Dunn Design Associates
- Wedding Planner at Abella Events
- Wine Maker at Wind River Cellars



Here is their description of "Hot Rods & Horsepower:"

"Is your career stuck in neutral? Do you live for fast cars and hot rod magazines? Then it's time to shift gears with a VocationVacations holiday! Come enter the world of a premier Hot Rod Manufacturer whose 1932 convertible roadster was featured on the cover of Car and Driver magazine's June, 2005 issue.

"Team up with Craig Knight, managing partner for the Connecticut-based Hot Roads & Horsepower, as he takes you into the sexy world of hot-rods! Craig did not listen to his parents and wound up getting a law degree from Oxford University. Law was a poor choice for him and a change to investment banking only made things worse. A mid-life crisis and a love of fast cars and hot rods lead him to business partner, Jim Inglese...and the creation of Hot Rods & Horsepower. And now Craig is excited to share his passion with YOU.

"During this incredible VocationVacations adventure, Craig Knight and his Hot Rod team will mentor and work with you as you do some or all of the following:

- *Sit down at the boards with the Design Team*
- *Learn the concepts of new design*
- *Get involved in "Design to Build" planning sessions*
- *Fabricate the car*
- *Test-drive a completed car*
- *Understand how the car will be presented at Market (typically during a Las Vegas show)*
- *Learn show placement strategy from the marketing staff (typically for a Las Vegas show)*
- *Learn the fundamentals of taking a completed car to "Show"*

"The Hot Rod Manufacturer VocationVacations® holiday includes:

- *Two days of one-on-one mentorship in your dream job as a Hot Rod Manufacturer*
- *Lunches*
- *A VocationVacations® journal so you can document your dream job coming to reality*
- *One hour of pre-and post- VocationVacations® dream job holiday life strategy coaching from a VocationVacations® dream job holidays-approved guide*
- *A VocationVacations® dream job holiday gift as an ongoing reminder of your knowledgeable and fun-filled VocationVacations® experience!*



"Available: All year based on Mentors availability with exception of holiday weekends

"Price: \$1,299 + taxes

"Suggested Accommodations: (Not included in the price of your VacationVacations® dream job holiday)"

If any of you take one of these vacations, please send us a report! We all want to go! Bill of the great voice to be a Radio Announcer, Nedra and her husband to be Innkeepers, and I'm thinking of Animal Behaviorist.

NOTES FOR JSP GRADS

Follow-up Meetings

There will be 2 follow-up meetings in September. Graduates of any JSP class are welcome to attend — not just the August 2005 participants. Both meetings will be held in Room E-2118 at 10:00 am.

Tuesday, September 13

Tuesday, September 27

Come share your job search experience!

"Markets change, tastes change, so the companies and the individuals who choose to compete in those markets must change."

- An Wang, electronics engineer and executive



Job Fair

The next CTC Job Fair will be held on October 26 from 1 to 4 pm in the NFATC (aka FSI) Field House.



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